1948

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General

Possibility of Transjordan occupying Arab areas of Palestine

Sir A. Kirkbride
Amman
to Sir O. Baxpert
390/Sec
dated 5 Jan.

Last Paper

E2046

References

E11934/11934/G.

(Minutes)

If the Arab Legion is being deployed in Palestine restoring order, the security forces in Transjordan after May 15th will be pretty thin. There seems to be a good case for having the RAF units at Amman and Mafraq at the highest possible level by then.

In view, also, of the possible attempt by the Saud to march into Maan and Aqaba when the Arab Legion goes into Palestine, it seems a pity that HMG have decided that they cannot consider moving the RAF in Transjordan to those places. Would it perhaps be worth arranging to withdraw certain units now in Palestine to temporary (limited) camps at Maan and Aqaba. The presence of even quite small British detachments there would deter

34092 | the Saud, and we should have every justification

(Print)

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justification for such a move in view of the difficulties of the withdrawal operation.

M Walker 14/2
(M WALKER)

See ~~[illegible]~~
on E 2163/G

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PERSONAL

BRITISH LEGATION,
AMMAN.
5th January, 1948.

(390/Sec.).

E209

Dear Sargent,

Thank you for your letter (E 11734/11734/G) of the 22nd of December, 1947, about Palestine.

2. King Abdullah and other Transjordan authorities realise to the full the delicacy of our position regarding the occupation by Transjordan of the whole or part of the Arab areas of Palestine and I feel sure that they would not expect us to go to the point of encouraging them to take action on those lines.

A hint that such a solution would not be unacceptable to His Majesty's Government would be as far as we could be expected to go in that connection.

3. What is much more important is that His Majesty's Government should not take any immediate steps to reduce the efficacy of the means at the disposal of the Transjordan Government to control the Arab areas which it occupies. If present developments are anything to judge by, the whole of Palestine is going to be in a state of disorder by the time we lay down the mandate. When using the word disorder, I do not necessarily mean political disorder. At the moment only political disorders are reported from Palestine but the accounts of Transjordanians who have been on visits to the purely Arab areas of Palestine indicate that ordinary public security is extremely bad there already.

4. In some optimistic quarters the occupation is visualised as marching into the towns between cheering crowds and waving flags but I anticipate that the actual events will be very different.

Arab Palestine will be without any central authority or police force and whoever takes over will have to compete with the jealousies and ambitions of the local leaders, bands of patriots who want to fight the Jews, bands of patriots who want to fight each other for supremacy and bands of brigands out for loot from any sourse whatsoever.

I anticipate, therefore, that the task of restoring law and order in any area the occupy will strain to the full the capacities of the forces which will be at the disposal of the Transjordan Government.

Yours sincerely

Alec Kirkbride

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